FORTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY

OF THE

MISSISSIPPI

BAPTIST ASSOCIATION.

Minutes.

MARSHILL CHURCH,
OCTOBER 4, 1851.

The Delegates of the several Churches, composing the Mississippi Baptist Association met pursuant to adjournment with the Marshill Church, Amite county, Mississippi. The introductory sermon was preached by Elder Z. Reeves, from Isaiah the 62d chap. and 6th verse.

ITEM 1st. After a short recess, the Association was called to order by Elder Z. Reeves, and Elder S. Coker led in prayer.

2nd. Appointed Elders H. McKnight and H. D. F. Roberts reading clerks.

3rd. Called for and read letters from twenty-two Churches, enrolled the names of their Delegates, and minuted the statistics.

STATISTICAL TABLE OF THE CHURCHES.

CHURCHES.	DELEGATES.	Baptized.	Rec'd by letter	Excluded.	Restored.	Dead.	Dismissed.	Whites.	Colored	Total in Fellowship	Ministers.	Copies of Minutes.	Contributions.	Post-Offices	Sunday Meetings.
New Providence,	Wm. Hazlewood, R. J. Causey,	14	3	1		6	4	78	39	118		50	$ 9 00	Liberty,	4th
Ebenezer,	E. A. Haywood, J. S. McCoy,	52	9			1		97	40	137		75	10 00	Rose Hill,	3d
East Fork,	Z. Reeves, J. Everett,	1	2	2		1		62	16	78	1	40	8 00	Liberty,	2d
Zion Hill,	R. Wilkinson, J. Jenkins,		1	1		2	3	40	12	52	1	40	6 00	Zion Hill,	3d
Shiloh,	A Letter, but no Delegates,						1	6	66	72		24	2 00	Holly Retreat	
Galilee,	A. McKenzie, G. R. Clayton,		1	4			1	97	23	120		75	10 00	Centreville,	2d
Hopewell,	H. D. F. Roberts,			1		2	2	23	7	30		20	5 00	Meadville,	1, 3,
Marshill,	Wm. F. Cain, Wm. Marselus,							27	1	28		30	5 00	Smithdale,	1st
Salem,	Calvin Magee, F. Allen,	6	6				7	43	11	54	2	35	4 00	Holmesville,	3d
Friendship, Pike co.,	S. Cupsted, F. Young,					1	1			11		15	3 50	Holmesville,	3d
Ramah,	Wilson Clark, S. Coward,									13	1	15	2 00	Smithdale,	4th
Jackson,	G. W. Catlett,			2				17	73	90		25	5 00	Jackson, La.	
Mount Pleasant,	J. Hall, J. Price,					1	2	33	4	37		40	5 00	Holmesville,	2d
Liberty,	H. McKnight, G. F. Webb,	26	2			1	1	81	37	118	1	75	8 00	Liberty,	1, 3,
Mt. Zion, Franklin co.	J. H. Fleming, M. Whittington,	7				1		18	5	23	1	25	4 00	Meadville,	3d
Friendship, Franklin co.	Wm. East, Wm. Elsey,		2			1	3			35	1	30	3 00	Friendship,	2d
Spring Hill,	A. Richmond,						2	18	1	19		25	3 00	Homochitto,	1st
Mt. Zion, Copiah co.	L. Smith,	6	11	1			1			51		35	6 00	Colamer,	4th
Bogue Chitto,	J. B. Quinn, J. Walker,	19	3		3		2	87	18	105		50	10 50	Holmesville,	1st
Mt. Moriah,	S. Coker, Wm. Gwin,		1	1			2	33		33	1	20	5 25	Brookhaven,	3d
Sarepta,	M. Seal, E. McCaa,		3		1					22	2	30	4 00	Malcolm,	4th
New Salem,															
Percy's Creek,	J. S. Smith,	4				6		29	21	50	1	40	5 00	Woodville,	2, 4,
Mt. Olive,															
		128	43	13	4	23	32	789	374	1295	12	814	$ 123 25		

4th. The Association was then organized by the re-election of Elder Z. Reeves, Moderator, and Bro. G. P. Claughton, Clerk; Bros. Wm. T. Cain and Wm. Gwin, Tellers.

5th. The door was then open for the reception of Churches.

6th. Ministering Brethren present were invited to seats with us, and to participate with us in our deliberations.

7th. Appointed Bros. Wm. F. Cain, J. B. Quin, and R. J. Causey, a Committee on Preaching.

8th. Appointed Elder H. McKnight assistant clerk.

9th. Received correspondence from sister Associations as follows, and the hand of fellowship extended to their Messengers, viz:

Mississippi River—Elder W. B. Wall, with a letter and package of Minutes.

Pearl River—Elder Wm. Fortenberry.

10th. Elders S. J. Caldwell, W. B. Wall, and H. McKnight, Messengers from the Mississippi Baptist State Convention, presented a letter of correspondence from said Convention to this body—when, on motion, it was—

Resolved, That said letter be read and received, and that the Messengers from said Convention be received and invited to seats with us, and the hand of fellowship extended to them.

11th. The Committee on Preaching reported, that Elders C. Magee, A. McKenzie and H. McKnight preach on Lord's-day, in the order of their names.

12th. Appointed Bros. W. Gwin, G. F. Webb, and J. B. Quin, a Financial Committee.

13th. Appointed Elders S. Coker, H. McKnight, A. McKenzie, and C. Magee, with the Moderator and Clerk, a Committee of Arrangement and Revision.

14th. Appointed on Correspondence to Sister Associations, viz:

Mississippi River—Elder H. McKnight to write, and Elders H. McKnight and A. McKenzie, Messengers.

15th. *Pearl River*—Elder C. Magee to write, and Elders C. Magee and S. Coker, Messengers.

16th. *Union*—Elder H. D. F. Roberts to write, and Elders H. D. F Roberts and Z. Reeves, Messengers.

17th. *Eastern La.* Elder A. McKenzie to write, and Elders R. Wilkinson and M. Seal, Messengers.

18th. Bro. Thos. R. Cheatham, the Treasurer of this Association, presented his letter of resignation through Bro. McKenzie—when, on motion, his resignation was received.

19th. On motion, *Resolved*, That the thanks of this Association be tendered to Bro. T. R. Cheatham, our late Treasurer, for the faithful and disinterested services rendered to this body by him as our late Treasurer.

20th. Appointed Bro. R. J. Causey Treasurer of this Association, and Bro. G. F. Webb Treasurer of the Missionary Fund.

21st. *Resolved*, That we open a correspondence with the Mississippi Baptist State Convention, and send as our Messenger to said Convention Elder H. D. F. Roberts.

22nd. Appointed Elder H. McKnight to write the letter of correspondence to the Mississippi Baptist State Convention.

The stand being occupied since the introductory by Elders M. Seal and E. McCaa,—the Association adjourned to 9 o'clock Monday morning. Concluding prayer by Elder Roberts.

EXERCISES ON THE SABBATH.

The congregation met at an early hour. Elder C. Magee preached from Matthew, 5th chap. and 8th verse. Elder A. McKenzie preached from Titus, 2nd chap. and 14th verse. After a few minutes recess for refreshment, the congregation again seated themselves. Elder H. McKnight being unwell, Elder S. J. Caldwell preached from Galatians, 3rd chap. and 26th verse; and in the close, came down from the stand inviting those who wished to join him in prayer, and those who wished to be prayed for, to give him their hand—which invitation was accepted by very many, and we hope with all the solemnity of eternity in view.

MONDAY MORNING.

23rd. Met pursuant to adjournment. Prayer by Elder Magee.

24th. The Committee of Arrangement and Revision made their report, which was received, and is as follows:

1. Call the Roll.
2. Read the Rules of Decorum.
3. Call for Reports.
4. Call for Circular-Letter.
5. Call for Correspond. Letters.
6. Query.
7. Motions and Resolutions.
8. Appointments.
9. Adjournment.

Respectfully submitted, S. COKER, Chairman.

25th. The Roll was called.

26th. Read the Rules of Decorum.

27th. On motion it was *Resolved*, as the sense of this Association, that the Rules of Decorum forbid a Church from choosing any Brethren other than from among its own members from being Delegates in this body.

28th. The Committee on Finance made their report, which was adopted. [See Appendix A.]

29th. The Treasurer of the Missionary Fund made his report, which was adopted. [See Appendix B.]

30th. The Committee on Preaching reported that Elders Wm. Fortenberry, C. Magee and H. D. F. Roberts preach to-day in the order of their names.

31st. The Circular-Letter called for, read and adopted. [See Appendix C.]

32nd. Corresponding Letters called for, read and adopted.

33rd. Query from the Mount Pleasant Church—"Is it according to Gospel order, for a Church to come into conference, and open her door for the reception of members into her fellowship, if they have not an ordained Minister with them." The above query taken up and investigated; when it was decided in the affirmative by a unanimous vote.

34th. WHEREAS the citizens of Clinton, Mississippi, and the vicinity around have tendered the property of Mississippi College to the Baptist denomination, free of all cost, only requiring them to keep up a literary seminary in the town of Clinton; and WHEREAS said property has been received and new trustees appointed, and they have employed a gentleman, of high standing as a scholar and disciplinarian, to take charge

of the Primary Department, and intends improving the institution as the wants of the denomination demands—

Resolved, That we recommend the Mississippi College to the patronage and support of our denomination.

35th. *Resolved*, That preaching the Gospel is the ordained instrumentality by which God designs to convert the world.

Resolved, That it is the duty of our Churches, and we recommend them to seek out promising gifts in their midst, and extend such encouragement to them as they may need.

Resolved, That the increasing intelligence of our Churches, and the people generally, is a providence indicating the duty of making provisions for an able Ministry to take our places.

Resolved, That as there are young ministering Brethren wishing to prosecute their studies farther, before entering more fully into the labors and responsibilities of the sacred office, but are destitute of the means necessary; that we do agree to sustain one such young Brother—He being duly accredited.

Resolved, That in order to carry out the above resolutions, we request all the Churches in our bounds to send up funds for this purpose.

36th. *Resolved*, That the thanks of this Association are due to the citizens of the neighborhood of Marshill Church for their hospitality and kindness, extended to this body during its present meeting.

37th. Appointed Elders Z. Reeves and A. McKenzie, and Bro. Wm. F. Cain, a Committee to visit the New Salem Church, and inquire into her situation, and report to the next meeting of this body.

38th. Appointed a Union Meeting with the Jackson Church, La., commencing on Saturday before the 3rd Sabbath in November, 1851.

39th. Appointed Elder C. Magee to preach the next introductory sermon, and Elder A. McKenzie his alternate.

40th. Appointed the Clerk to superintend the printing and distributing of eleven hundred copies of the Minutes of this meeting; and that he draw on the Treasurer for funds to pay for the same: and that he receive the usual compensation.

41st. Appointed the next meeting of this body to be held with the Mount Zion Church, Copiah county, Mississippi, commencing on Saturday before the first Sabbath in October, 1852, at 10 o'clock A. M.

42nd. The Minutes read for correction. After which, the Moderator made a few remarks very appropriate to the occasion. The Association sung a hymn, and Elder Z. Reeves led in prayer. And we were dismissed.

Z. REEVES, Moderator.

G. P. CLAUGHTON, Clerk.

Ministers of the Mississippi Baptist Association.

Shadrack Coker,	Moses Seals,
Ezra Courtney,	Roland Wilkinson,
Zachariah Reeves,	William Thompson,
Wilson Clark,	T. Kingsberry,
Alexander McKenzie,	H. D. F. Roberts,
Hamilton McKnight,	Calvin Magee,
J. D. McFarland,	Elihu McCaa.

Adam Cloy and David Roberts, Licentiates.

Appendix A.

REPORT OF THE FINANCIAL COMMITTEE.

DEBIT.

In the hands of the Treasurer,	$ 11 53	
Contributions of the Churches,	123 25	134 78

CREDIT.

Paid A. McKenzie,	$ 12 00	
Paid H. D. F. Roberts,	14 00	
Paid S. Coker,	6 00	
Paid Z. Reeves,	10 00	
Paid W. Clark,	12 00	
Paid R. Wilkinson,	14 00	68 00
		$ 66 78
Paid for printing these Minutes,	$ 50 00	
For superintending the same,	15 00	65 00
In the hands of Treasurer,		$ 1 78

Respectfully submitted,

J. B. QUIN,
WM. GWIN,
G. F. WEBB,
} Committee.

Appendix B.

Funds sent up to the Association for special purposes.

For Foreign Missions—Percy's Creek Church, 1850, $3 55; Percy's Creek, 1851, $10 00; New Providence, $6 00; Salem, $1 25; Bogue Chitto, $11 50—*Total*, $32 30.

Domestic Missions—Salem, 25 cts.; Bogue Chitto, $6 50—*Total*, $6 75.

Indian Missions—Gallilee Church, $6 00; New Providence, $6 00; Salem, $3 50; Bogue Chitto, $14 00; John Everett, sen'r, $3 00; Allen Spurlock, $3 00; Francis Wigly, 30 cts.—*Total*, $35 80.

Creek Indians—Marshill, $5 95.

Bible Cause—Salem, $8 25; Bogue Chitto, $4 00—*Total*, $12 25.

Bible Cause in China—Marshill, $6 00.

Home Missions—Hopewell, $3 60.

Respectfully submitted, G. F. WEBB, Treasurer.

Examined and approved,

JAS. B. QUIN,
WM. GIVIN,
} Financial Committee.

Appendix C.

Circular-Letter.

The Mississippi Association to all the Churches composing her body,—sendeth Christian salutation:

Beloved Brethren:—Among the vast number of subjects, which have excited the interest, and employed the pens of many able writers of some modern denominations of Christians, that of Apostolic Succession has been a favorite one. The Roman Catholic and English Episcopal Churches both profess to have come down to our times in one regular chain of uninterrupted descent from the Apostles; and consequently infer, that out of their communion, there is no covenanted salvation. These high grounds they attempt to establish from history, while they are compelled to have recourse to tradition for the very first link in their chain, viz: whether the Apostle St. Peter was first Bishop of Rome: nor are their writers agreed among themselves, admitting the first traditional assumption, who were the three first immediate successors of Peter; while all the rest of Christiandom are as well acquainted with the rise, and all the historical circumstances connected with the *rise*, of the two above denominations, as they are with the history of the rise of any of the modern nations of Europe. It has indeed become fashionable among writers to say, "That the Roman Catholic is the oldest of all the Churches which exist at the present day." This we believe is an unwarranted assertion.

That the true Church has ever existed since its first establishment in Jerusalem, is evident to all who believe in the Divine authority of the New Testament. The failure of the existence of the true Church would be a signal failure of the Saviour's declaration, "That the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."—(Matt. xvi. 18.) Nevertheless, so scant are the ecclesiastical records of many centuries by-gone, and so obscure and persecuted was the Church during those centuries, that most that can now be collected are faint glimmerings, mostly from the pens of the enemies of the Church. These occasionally shining out amid the darkness of wasting ages, barely suffice to identify its continued existence. If, however, there does exist at the present time a *people* adhering strictly to the faith, and maintaining pertinaciously the government, and peculiar usages of the primitive Church; if, moreover, such *people* be diverse from all the professed denominations of Christians, in their organization, ordinances, officers and government; and, especially, if impenetrable mystery involve their origin, so that their rise, as a *people*, is buried in the deep mists of antiquity;—then will it require proof positive to overthrow *their* claim to Apostolical organization. Consult Rev. xii. 6, xi. 3, and 2d Thess. ii. 3, and you will perceive it clearly predicted, that the history of the true Church would be involved in obscurity for twelve hundred and sixty years.

The word Church (ehklesia) simply signifies an Assembly, but when Christ calls it "*my* Church" and "*the* Church of God," he of course de-

fines it, and points it out as *his* Assembly. If only two or three persons assemble in his *name*, or under his authority, to worship, they have the promise of his spiritual presence, (Matt. xviii. 20.) To meet at one place for prayer, exhortation, and the breaking of bread, (Acts ii. 42,) and especially by a continuance in the Apostles' doctrine, gave evidence of the existence of a Church in the Apostles' days. What particular ceremonies took place among the disciples, in the organization of the old model Church at Jerusalem, is not for us to say. Whether they had any particular written abstract of principles and covenent, or whether the single fact of being united together under Christ, and in his personal presence, sufficed. We incline to believe that they had a written formula, from 2d Tim. i. 13, Rom. vi. 17, Rev. ii. 25, and 1st Tim. vi. 3.

In the xvi. ch. and 17 v. of Matthew, the Lord Jesus has clearly pointed out to us the materials necessary for the formation of a Gospel Church. It is such persons as have a knowledge of Christ revealed to them by the Father, and who, having such knowledge, openly confess Christ to be the Son of the living God. This also agreeth with Paul's declaration, (Rom. x. 10,) "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." But whatever might have been the number of Articles in the Disciples' Creed, or however promulgated among them, it was absolutely necessary to the very being of an organization, that there should be some well-known and clearly recognized bond of fellowship. When united together to propagate a new and persecuted faith to the world, they must understand on what ground their Union was formed. In the reception of members into the Church, after they *were* organized, they doubtless took the outward, open profession of faith in Christ, as a sufficient qualification on the part of the candidate for admission; and many were baptized whose hearts were never changed.

Yet it would seem from the 2d chap. of the Acts, that none were admitted to baptism on the day of Pentecost, but such as "gladly received the word of the Lord," (v. 41,) which would lead to the conclusion, that a spiritual change was required on the part of the person admitted. St. Paul, in enumerating the immediate fruits of the Spirit, reckons joy, or gladness as one, (Gal. v. 22,) and also makes it one of the integral elements of the kingdom of God, (Rom. xiv. 17.) Indeed the very requirement of repentance supposed a change of heart and life necessary to baptism. And so particular was John the Baptist as to admit none to his baptism, except such as had "fruits meet for repentance," (Matt. iii. 8.) Some evidence, satisfying the Church that the candidates were "new creatures in Christ Jesus" were perhaps invariably required.

That they were "added to the Church" by baptism, none deny. It does appear by the reading of the New Testament, that all who were baptized, were admitted to fellowship, and none were admitted to fellowship without baptism. When the convicted asked the Apostles "what they should do," Peter replied, "repent and be baptized every one of you," (Acts ii. 38.) And when preaching at the house of the Centurion, Cornelius, as soon as he perceived the tokens of the Spirit's presence in the congregation, he cried out, "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Ghost as well as we," (Acts x. 47.) The cases of Philip and the Eunuch, and of

Paul and Lydia, and of Paul and Silas and the Jailor, (Acts viii. 26 *et seq.*, and xvi. 14 to the end of the chapter,) are sufficient to show that the Apostles and Elders strictly obeyed the Saviour's command, (Mark xvi. 15 and 16,) "Go ye into all the world, preach the Gospel to every creature; he that *believeth* and is baptized shall be saved," &c.

That the action of baptism was immersion, is equally clear from what Paul tells us it was designed to illustrate, (Rom. vi. 4.) If the very form of the action be a lively memorial of the fact that Christ was *buried* for us, and that he *rose* again from the dead for us; then can *this* memorial of *that* event, be kept in no other action of baptism, but the entire immersion of the body. Besides which the very word of institution means immersion, (see Campbell's Harmony of the Gospels, and McNight on the Epistles, and Carson on Baptism,) and the records of classical antiquity does not furnish one passage of its use, where it may not be fairly so rendered. The primitive Church, however, did not consider baptism the new birth, (see John iii. 8,) nor as the water of regeneration cleansing from pollution, (1 Peter iii. 21,) but as the putting on of Christ professionally, (Gal. iii. 27,) and as an act of obedience to him, placing them in a proper school, in which they might receive instruction, (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.)

Our Saviour had chosen twelve plain men, of amiable disposition, and good ordinary understanding, and perfect in all their senses, to be the witnesses to the world, of his life and miracles, his death and burial, and his resurrection and ascension. Eleven of them proved faithful, and continued together in Jerusalem till the Pentecost. There were also seventy Ministers whom the Saviour ordained, and appointed Missionaries during his own Ministry. Besides these there were thirty-nine others present at the Pentecostal prayer meeting, some of whom were females, and among them, Mary, the mother of the Lord, (Acts i. 15.) The ordained Ministers were eighty-one, and we have no doubt that the seventy Missionaries are the same that are called Elders, in the meeting held to examine the query of the Antioch Church respecting the circumcision of the Gentiles. The one hundred and twenty are called the *Church*, to which the three thousand converts were added the same day. The utmost equality reigned among these Ministers, and though it pleased God that by the mouth of Peter, first the Jews, and afterwards the Gentiles, should hear and believe the Gospel; yet did Peter claim no pre-eminence among his Brethren; and for the last mentioned act of the Ministry, he had to give an account of himself to the Church.

It pleased the Brethren in those days to sell their estates, or at least a part of them, and to throw all the funds thus raised into a common stock, that all might fare alike, both rich and poor. They likewise made choice of the Apostles, that they should guard the funds and make distribution of them as every one had need. It was soon found, however, too burdensome to the Apostles, and indeed contrary to the very kind of labors to which they were called and appointed. Hence they advised the Church to choose out of their own body seven men of good report and full of the Holy Ghost, who might take the oversight of the treasury and wait upon tables. The Church acceded to the measure, and chose Stephen, Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicholaus a proselyte of Antioch, who coming under the hands of the Apostles were regularly ordained and installed into office, (see first part of vi. chap. of Acts.) These officers received the appellation of Diakanai

or Deacons, (see 1 Tim. iii. ch.,) and co-operating with the Elders in the Church, were, together with the Elders, the only officers known in the Church in the earliest age.

In the New Testament, the Ministers are called by different names, as Elders or Presbyters and Bishops; but it does not appear that these names designated any superiority or subordination of rank or dignity among them. Nay, they are different names indiscriminately applied to the same persons, (Acts xx. 17, 28—1 Pet. v. 1, 2) The word bishop is translated in two of the above places "overseers" and "oversight," which is the literal English of the word. These passages are thought sufficient to show, that the primitive Church had but one order of Ministers, indifferently and interchangeably called Elders and Bishops; and these, with the Deacons, were, as above stated, the only officers known to the primitive Church.

The officers had each his appropriate labor, but they had not separately nor jointly the government of the Church. The body of the Church are termed the "multitude," in several places in the Acts, and to their decision all matters relative to government were referred.—Take, as an example, the case referred to in the xv. chap. of Acts. Paul and Barnabas were the Messengers sent by the Church at Antioch with the query concerning the circumcision of the Gentiles, and their expenses were borne by the Church, verse 3. When they arrived at Jerusalem, they were kindly received by the Apostles and Brethren of that Church; but there were some members who had, previous to their profession of Christianity, been of the sect of the Pharisees, who differed about the question with Paul and Barnabas; so that it was thought advisable to call a meeting of the Church, which was accordingly done. The subject was freely and fully discussed at that meeting. Luke says (verse 7) that there "was much disputing." Then Peter rose, and rehearsed the history of the introduction of the Gospel among the Gentiles through his labors. When he took his seat, Paul and Barnabas successively rose and related, at some length, their labors among the Gentiles, the glorious triumphs of Gospel grace attending their labors, and the miracles which God enabled them to perform in attestation of the truth of their mission. Last of all, James, "the Lord's brother," and who is admitted by all antiquity to have been Pastor or Bishop of the Church at Jerusalem, rose and delivered his opinion, which coincided with that of Peter and Paul. When he sat down, the motion being put, the whole multitude agreed unanimously in their Pastor's views. Hence, a circular-letter was written containing those views; and delegates appointed to go with Paul and Barnabas to bear the letter. "Then pleased it the Apostles and Elders, with the *whole Church*, to send chosen men of their *own company* to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; namely, Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the Brethren," verse 22.

From the perusal of the above, the following facts are established:

I. That the Church as a body carried her own keys, and acted without any control of the Ministers further than the influence of their advice.

II. That the Church at Antioch had no dependence on that at Jerusalem, other than a confidence in the wisdom of her counsels.

III. Consequently that each Church formed an independent body, capable of transacting its own business.

As corroborating with our views on the subject of the government of the ancient Churches, suffer us to present you the following quotations, viz:

1. From Buck's Theological Dictionary. On the word church, he says: "We find no mention made of Diocesan Churches in the New Testament. In the days of the Apostles, Bishops were so far from presiding over more Churches than one, that sometimes a plurality of Bishops presided over the same Church, (Phil. i. 1.) Nor do we find any mention made of Parochial Churches. Some of the inhabitants of a Parish may be infidels, Mahometans or Jews; but Gospel Churches consist of such as make an open profession of faith in Christ, and subjection to the Gospel. (Rom. i. 7—1 Cor. xiv. 33.) It seems plain, then, that the primitive Churches of Christ were properly congregational. The first Church at Jerusalem met together in one place at the same time, (Acts i. 14, 15.) The Church of Antioch did the same, (Acts xiv. 27.) The Church of Corinth did the same, (1 Cor. xiv. 23.) The same did the Church at Troas, (Acts xx. 7.) There was a Church at Cenchrea, a port of Corinth, distinct from the Church in that city, (Rom. xvi. 1.) He that was a member of one Church, was not a member of another Church. The Apostle Paul, writing to the Colossian Society, saith—'Epaphras, who is one of you, saluteth you,' (Gal. iv. 12.)"

2. Gibbon, whose fidelity as an historian, is as remarkable as his want of faith in the sacred Scriptures, saith thus: "Such was the mild and equal constitution by which the Christians were governed more than an hundred years after the death of the Apostles. Every *Society* formed within itself a separate and independent Republic; and although the most distant of these little states maintained a mutual as well as a friendly intercourse of letters and deputations, the Christian world was not yet connected, by any supreme authority or legislative assembly," (Milman's edition of Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, printed 1845; see p. 273, line 19.) (See also Mosheim 497, 512, fol. Lon.—Novatus, Felecissimus. &c.)

3. Milman says: "The Dioceses were not formed before the beginning of the second century," (see note on Gibbon, vol. 1, p. 409.)

The following passages of Scripture will throw some light on the manner, as well as the meaning applied to the word, of ordaining either Elders or Deacons. Acts i. 26, "And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell on Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven Apostles." The Church had previously *chosen* Joseph and Matthias, and not being able to decide which of the twain was most suitable, referred the decision by lot to God. Again, Acts xiii. 2, 3, "And as they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, 'separate me, Barnabas and Saul, for the work whereunto I have called them;' and when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away." Again, 1 Tim. iv. 14, "Neglect not the gift which is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery." Mark, in the iii. ch. and 14 v. of his Gospel, says that Christ "ordained twelve." This Christ himself explains, John vi. 70, by saying, "Have not I *chosen* you twelve." So in Acts xiv. 23, "And when they had *ordained* them Elders in every Church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord," &c. Here the word 'cheirotoneesantes,' translated 'ordained,' conveys an evident allusion to the manner in which the persons ordained were chosen, viz:

by the stretching forth of the hands of the Brethren in making *choice* of them. We think it very clear, that Elders, as well as Deacons, were chosen by the Churches in which they had immediate fellowship, and set apart to ther respective offices by a plurality of Elders, at the request of the Churches.

It is somewhat remarkable, that express mention is made of the ordination of no Minister by name, but of such as were either Apostles or Missionaries, (see Acts xiii. 3; 1 Tim. iv. 14, and Mark iii. 14; Acts i. 26; see also Matt. x. and Luke x. first part.) The Missionaries, either Home or Foreign, were sent out two and two together, intimating that a new Church could not be properly constituted, neither Elders nor Deacons legally ordained, by less than two duly qualified Elders. All persons directed to be ordained Elders or Deacons, except Missionaries, were to be ordained in a Church, (Acts xiv. 23,) and not to be ordained without any Church; signifying that every Church should have at least one Minister, and that every local Minister should labor in one Church.

With respect to the support afforded to the Ministers by the Churches, we have in part to refer to the instructions of the Saviour, (Matt. x. 10,) and to the Epistles of St. Paul, and especially to the ix. chap. of his 1 Epis. to the Cor.; and in part to the example of the Church at Jerusalem. The contributions to the funds of the Church were voluntary, (Acts v.) though they appear to have been ample and munificent. Were we to judge from the amount raised by the Antioch Church and given to Paul of Samarata, they would seem almost princely. (See M. S. Gibbon, vol. i. p. 314, 315. Mosheim fol. 702 *et seq.*) We have many reasons for believing that a very ample support was given to Ministers during the three first centuries. The example set by the Church at Jerusalem was closely followed by the Gentile converts, (1 Thess. ii. 14.)

We have no reason to doubt that the rule of discipline laid down by the Saviour (Matt. xviii. 15, 16, 17) was universally adopted, and never departed from, in the early age of the Church. Paul adopted it in his dealings with the Corinthian Church, (2 Cor. xiii. 1,) and he then makes an exception to it as a general rule, in cases of dealing with Elders, (1 Tim. v. 19.) The Saviour's authority, the beautiful simplicity, and the full efficiency of the rule, as suited to every possible case, will ever commend it to all who love the Saviour, or who wish to walk in peace and holiness of life.

Thus have we gone through, and given a very brief outline of some of the leading particulars relative to the formation and movement of the Christian Church in its infancy. The plan of its government adapted it to all regions, climates and languages of the earth, and to all the varied forms of civil government. The whole earth might be dotted with congregations, meeting for the sole purpose of receiving or imparting religious instruction, and for cultivating the more refined moral feelings of our nature, without ever meddling with the civil magistrate, or impeding in the least the regular current of law. Like the lovely luminaries that cluster on the firmament of Heaven, exerting each an attractive influence on the rest, in preserving the harmony of their motions; and all uniting in one associated glow of effulgence to overcome the darkness of the night.

In writing the above, our Bible was at our right hand, and we gave our diligent and earnest endeavor, if we left out any important particulars respecting the organization and action of the primitive Church; at least

not to pen down any thing but what was literally and demonstrably true. And yet, from our long connection with the regular Baptist denomination, of rather more than forty years, and from an intimate knowledge of their organization and government, we seemed to be giving a portraiture of that denomination at the present time. There is a similarity of features that comes nearer than a mere family likeness; it bears the strong impress of personal identity. It reminded us of an anecdote of late occurrence. A Pedobaptist presented his little daughter with a New Testament, and after reading the three first chapters in Matthew, the child thus remonstrated, "Pa, why did you get me a *Baptist* Bible?"

If it were necessary, at a period when the Baptists have spread themselves over the face of the whole earth, and when from the teeming press, scores of organs are announcing to the world their peculiar views and manner of government; to enter upon a minute detail of their peculiarities as a people, it would not be difficult to show that Luke's description of the ancient Church, equally fits the regular Baptist Church of the present day in these United States. This we think a work of supererrogation. There are none but the wilfully ignorant, who do not know that every item, of either formation, government or action, above written, does characterize the Baptists. Their Churches maintain their pristine independency; retain their two officers; sustain their Missionaries, and keep up the pure ordinances of the Gospel, as they were handed down to us from the most ancient times.

But it is certainly a question of importance, When did the Baptist take their rise in the world? Whence are they—from Heaven, or of men? We have an historical account, pretty satisfactory, of the origin of all the other denominations of the present day. But where shall we search for the records, and how shall we date the beginning, of the Baptist Church? John Wickliffe, in the middle of the 14th century, is perhaps the first Baptist Minister of distinction in modern times. John Milton, the celebrated Bard of England, is said to have belonged to the sect of the Baptists. His letters to the poor persecuted Waldenses of Piedmont are extant. He doubtless felt a full fellowship for the Waldenses, and declares them to be the people,

> "Who kept the truth so pure of old,
> When all the nations after error ran."

Near the time of Milton flourished John Bunyan, universally known as a Baptist. He mentions cursorily in his Autobiography, a great many Baptist Ministers and Churches, and even Associations, with which he had connection in the course of his Ministry, in England and Wales. He informs us, moreover, that they had correspondence with other Churches in Germany and Piedmont, holding the same faith, and being of the same order, as those in England. And both Milner and Mosheim concede, that the Munster Anabaptists had no connection with the Baptist Church. The question then recurs, Whence are they?

Reineirus Saccho, who wrote a history of the Waldenses in the 15th century, traces a people, under different names, but of the same heresy, back to the third or fourth century of the Christian era. At what precise time the true Church was veiled in clouds, or "fled into the wilderness," is impossible to determine. She was promised a place of refuge from destruction, but not from tribulation. And through the darkest ages, there existed a people who loudly protested against the abomina-

tions of Popery. These people were hunted down, slandered, robbed, slain, and in every way persecuted by the Roman Hierarchy for centuries; till their blood stained the rocks of all the mountains of Europe, and their bodies fattened their fields. Many whole books by the Catholics, written in those dark ages, and coming down to our times, are filled with invectives against those people, and give pretended descriptions of their doctrines and manner of worship. Some of those writers ingenuously confess their soundness of faith and innocence of life, but censure their stubbornness in refusing to acknowledge the supremacy of the Pope.

Now, will any of the Protestant denominations claim to be that identical Church, which preserved the truth of God in the dark ages? Did they act before they had existence in the world? We have abundant reason to bless and honor God, who has, in these times, raised up so many witnesses to join their voices with ours in protestations against the "man of sin," and to oppose many corruptions in the worship of God. Let us cherish love to all who love our Lord Jesus in sincerity. But the Lutherans, the Presbyterians, the Episcopalians, Quakers, Methodists, Campbellites, &c., are not the people who protested against Romanism, through seas of blood and fields of carnage, before the times of Martin Luther, John Calvin, Henry VIII., John Wesley, George Fox, and Alexander Campbell. What then has become of that people? Have they become extinct? Did they bear their testimony to the truth, till God enabled them to come up out of the wilderness, leaning on their beloved, and immediately expire? And if so, what originated the present Baptist Church? No doubt if you strike a link of the Baptist chain in the 19th century, that it will rattle back through the silent lapse of revolving years till it ends on John the Baptist. And though the locks of the Baptist Church are whitened by hundreds of years gone by, yet her robes are wet with the dews of her youth. The freshness of the morning still glows upon her cheeks.

If there were a number of independent Churches established by the Apostles in the first age—if corruption sprang up among them in an after age, so that *a* people, maintaining the truth of God's worship and ordinances, dissented from the corrupt body—if *that* people continued to exist amidst persecutions through the worst of times—and if there be still *a* people holding punctilliously all the doctrines, ordinances and practises of the earliest age—and, finally, if the Baptists be *the* people now holding those ancient customs and truths;—then will it require proof positive to overturn her claims to Apostolical institution. To prove that the Baptist of the present day is not the self-same Church organized at Jerusalem, and descending, uncorrupted, through all periods of time, will require historical facts, which we think do not exist. The facts of her resemblance and mysterious origin stand out in bold relief, making a strong *prima facie* case, with violent presumption in its favor, which will require demonstration to disprove. Moreover, the burden of proof lies on him who denies the facts. If there were any breaks or interruptions in the regular course of the Church's descent, we know it not. It is enough for us to establish the identity of the Baptist Church of the present day, with that constituted by the Apostles, and to challenge the world to disprove the identity; show when the true Church failed, and when the Baptist Church arose.

Thus we see, dearly beloved Brethren, that our Church leaned her

infant head upon the old covenants of promise, and her first Minister was justly entitled to the High Priesthood in the order of Abia. In her early infancy, she struggled with the ancient Jewish Church, and prevailed. She opened her eyes in the midst of a vast empire, stretching over seas, and lakes and rivers, and a territory upon which the sun never set.—With this mighty empire she was forced to contend, and she freely shed her blood. In less than three hundred years, she beheld the soaring Eagle of that Empire prostrate in the dust, and her own blood-stained banner, a simple cross, unfurled over the conquering legions, while she seated herself peacefully on the throne of the Cæsars. But prosperity will turn a wise man mad. Wealth introduced corruption; the rod of the Almighty was stretched out; the empire itself was destroyed; and out of that conflict of nations, which overturned the empire and was like the confused waves of the sea roaring, there rose a Monster, which again waged war with the Saints. The Church was now threatened with destruction, but God gave her the wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, and prophecy in sackcloth, one thousand two hundred and sixty years.

Again she has come forth "bright as the sun, clear as the moon, and terrible as an army with banners;" and has stretched herself over all the earth. Among what people soever she comes; whatever be their complexion, language or institutions; she comes with the Bible open in her hands; and still arrayed in primitive simplicity, calls upon the nations to repent and be baptized. She has lived to see empires fall; kingdoms arise, and flourish, and pass away; systems of philosophy, and confessions of faith formed, and advocated, and come to an end.—And we doubt not she will witness the kindling of that great conflagration, by which earth and heaven shall pass away with a great noise!

Oh! Brethren, what an heavenly building hath God reared! How has his peculiar, special providence watched over and preserved it through wasting ages! And has he given us a place and a name within her holy walls! How shall we sufficiently adore the riches of his grace, or evince our gratitude for the greatness of his munificence! Let us put on the whole armor of God, and work while it is called to-day, walking in the good works, which "He has ordained that we should walk in them."

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